

## Testimonies Project

As I am sure many of you are aware, for a long time SEFF has emphasised the importance of correcting the narrative of the Troubles through recording and publishing victims' testimonials, their lived experiences during the 'Troubles.'

We feel it is of the upmost importance to have these experienced available to the next generation and to ensure that they will never be forgotten. In the past SEFF has undertaken projects with the aim of publishing books collating these lived experiences, and now in line with recent times we are looking to go virtual and have these recordings for future use in education and research.

We are reaching out to our members and those beyond who were bereaved, injured, or were first responders working through the Troubles, and who wish to have their story heard.

We wish to get across the human side of these atrocities and highlight how they have impacted those that are still with us today.

We understand that sharing your most intimate of experiences can be extremely difficult and we want to assure that anyone taking part will receive the upmost care and support whilst doing so.

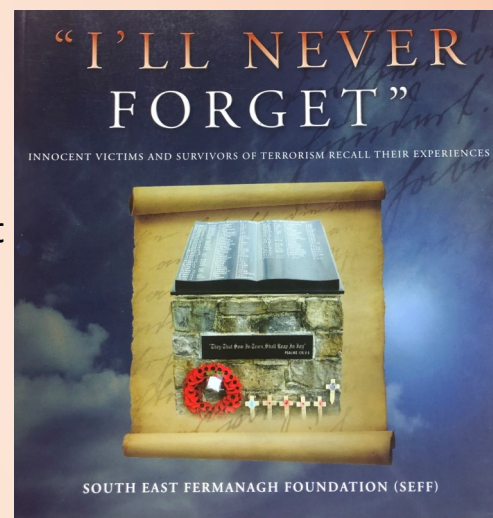
In line with government guidelines whilst ensuring the safety of all those involved the Project will soon commence.

If you are interested in having your lived experiences recorded or have any questions regarding participation in this project then please phone up the office on 028 677 23884 or email me at [rachel.watson.afiv@seff.org.uk](mailto:rachel.watson.afiv@seff.org.uk), if you are already receiving advocacy services from SEFF then please highlight your interest in taking part in this project to your advocate.

You may also contact SEFF's Director of Services Kenny Donaldson directly should you require to do so, Kenny can be contacted on: 028 677 23884 or 07900 882770.

**Rachel Watson**

Advocacy Project Admin



{{Photographed are two of SEFF's previously published testimony booklets, "I'll Never Forget" and "Your Legacy Lives On"}}



# Advocacy for Innocent Victims Newsletter



February 2021 Issue 37

AfIV Office (C/O SEFF),  
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Co Fermanagh BT92 0FP



Dear Member,

We all still continue to face this difficult period with the COVID pandemic, whilst this does affect our normal working practices we are trying to be innovative in how we provide an effective Advocacy Service; the greatest impact without doubt is not being able to have 'face to face' meetings with those we are supporting. This month has seen Joanne Dorrian joining the Advocacy Team, we would like to welcome her and wish her all the best in her new role, she has written a short introductory piece in this AFIV supplement.

In January we welcomed our Research and Monitoring Officer Rachel Glover back from maternity leave, and said farewell to her replacements Rachel Watson and Calvin Reid thanking them for their hard work during her absence. Only to welcome them both back a week later; for Rachel to assist us in co-ordinating our testimonial project and Calvin to help in the creation of a Border Trails virtual platform.

On the back of the revelations of the meetings that had been taking place at Lambeth Palace; (and we know how innocent victims were totally excluded) along with the Government response to the NI Affairs Committee report on legacy; Ian has written a piece highlighting some of the issues and dilemma's we currently face. In light of all this, the lobbying on behalf of innocent victim's issues continues despite restrictions, with us being involved in a number of talks with Government bodies, politicians and likeminded groups. We are also working on a number of wider strategic initiatives over coming months, in preparation for the anticipated further consultation phase relating to legacy proposals.

We have a welcome article from George Larmour the author of "They Killed the Ice-cream man" about his brother John, a member of the RUC murdered by the Provisional IRA in 1988. We would welcome anyone who is interested in writing an article for our AFIV supplement, we are keen, (as others are) to hear more of your experiences, opinions and comments on the issues effecting innocent Victims; please feel free to contact any member of the Advocacy Team for further guidance and information.

The team continues to provide support to retired members of both the Police and Military who have been under continuous investigation, despite having been admonished in previous investigations. We have attended meetings with retired associations representing all groups and another victims group to further discuss and have raised this issue with the Human Rights Commissioner, politicians and other influential parties.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Murtagh

(Advocacy Support Manager)



For general Advocacy queries please contact the SEFF Office on (028) 677 23884 or email [advocacy@seff.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@seff.org.uk)

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## New Advocacy Support Worker

Joanne Dorian - East Region (Covering County Antrim + North Down)

SEFF welcomes the newly appointed Joanne Dorrian as an AfIV Support Worker with SEFF. Post COVID restrictions lifting Joanne will be predominantly based in the east of Northern Ireland in offices located in Belfast, Lisburn and possibly Rathfriland. for the South-Down region.



### BIO

My name is Joanne Dorrian and I live in Newtownards with David and our two sons, Aaron (10) and Adam (5). I have recently been appointed as Advocacy Support Worker at SEFF and will primarily cover Co. Antrim and North Down.

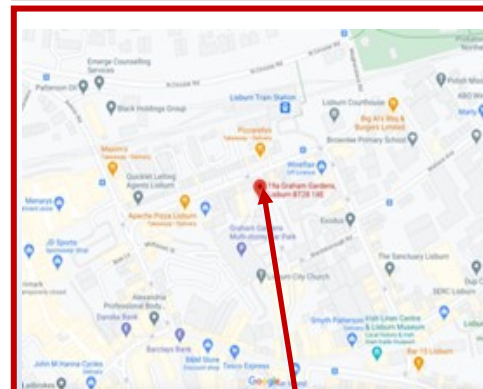
I have and continue to campaign for truth and justice in my personal life - our family have been doing so for almost 16 years. My sister Lisa Dorrian was murdered and her body hidden in 2005 and we as a family continue to pursue justice and truth alongside trying to recover Lisa's body through the PSNI and various other organisations. I am also a board member for National Missing Persons Helpline and K9 Search & Rescue charity which are both close to my heart.

Through my own circumstances, I am acutely aware of the impact that loss and trauma can have on individuals and families and I feel privileged to have this opportunity to work alongside victims' families and survivors to help them in their quest for Truth, Justice and Acknowledgement.

In my new role as Advocacy Support Worker I look forward to helping families to find and use their voice to try and gain whatever form of justice they seek. I personally know what it means to seek answers and how important that is.

My passion lies with legacy cases where the innocent victim or survivor has suffered and I believe these cases deserve as much effort and resources as any other case. I do not believe in a hierarchy of victims. Each case is as important as the next. I will work extremely hard to get results for any family I represent and will work hard to represent SEFF in the most positive way. I will continually invest in myself and always try to better my knowledge and skills so that I can offer the best version of myself to you all. I look forward to meeting and talking to you all when the situation allows and doing my best to make a difference for innocent victims and survivors.

Joanne



This month SEFF secured premises in Graham Gardens, Lisburn to extend our outreach services to the Eastern side of Northern Ireland. Initially this will be staffed by the Advocacy Team, but will offer the full range of SEFF Services.

Lisburn is geographically easily accessible from Greater Belfast, N. Down and Co. Antrim, with good bus and rail services for those reliant on public transport. We are hoping to have the premises up and running by early March, COVID restrictions permitting.



Page 2



NEW  
PREMISES  
COMING SOON



I note with caution from the Government's response, in the section entitled 'Information Recovery' it reads: ***The Government welcomes the conclusions of the Committee that it "is right to recognise the importance of providing families that seek it with as much information as possible about the death of a loved one" and its observation that "many families seek not redress, but merely to be treated with respect and to obtain information". The Government has always been clear we want to see information recovery at the heart of any new legacy system.***

The Government's response then criticises the current system for dealing with legacy by stating ***'It is clear that the current system for releasing Troubles-related information is not working, and the divisive cycle of reinvestigations and civil action as a primary route for truth recovery is failing to obtain answers for a majority of victims and families. As highlighted in some of the written submissions to the Committee, this focus on investigations is also hindering wider reconciliation in Northern Ireland. As pointed out by the Committee, many witnesses have said the likelihood of prosecutions at this stage is slim, with the passage of time it becomes increasingly challenging for investigations to satisfy the evidential thresholds necessary for prosecution'.*** Lead Investigator for Op Kenova and former Chief Constable Jon Boucher also stated to the Committee that it would be an ***"act of vandalism"*** to delay providing the truth to families because of prosecutions which are delayed year on year.

I appreciate there are many families who have accepted that the likelihood for securing a conviction for the murder of their loved one is doubtful and instead of redress they simply want to establish additional information on the circumstances. However, there are others who still wish to pursue a justice pathway. There is no 'one size fits all' response which works for all, therefore the Government should not take a unilateral approach. The vast majority of the victims and survivors who I provide Advocacy support to have not and will not give up on their quest for justice and remain steadfast to the hope of securing a conviction.

As a Victims Advocate I am currently working with a family who are having their loved one's murder, reviewed by PSNI Legacy Investigations Branch. I hope the Government take their views into consideration before announcing any new legacy proposals which could promote truth recovery at the expense of any further criminal investigations. Currently there are approximately 1,100 cases still to be reviewed by PSNI. These families never had the opportunity to engage with the HET. Although I accept the opportunity to produce new evidence is restricted, I firmly believe the advancement of forensic science could lead to families receiving Justice if they were afforded the opportunity of a case review. SEFF's Advocacy Service is on record in calling for PSNI LIB to be adequately funded and resourced to carry out these legacy reviews as they still remain best placed to do so.

Another positive I noted from the Committee was their acknowledgement that ***"the Irish Government will have a role to play in parts of a new legacy process. It will need to maintain a collaborative approach to help resolve legacy cases, which we heard has not always been the case in the past"***. Indeed, in recent times the Irish Government have pointed the finger at their British counterparts calling for inquiries while itself, reneging to engage and clean up their own doorstep regarding the country's not so distant past.

Simon Hoare MP, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee concluded: ***"The issues are, of course, complex and sensitive, and they become more so with the passage of time. That state of affairs should be a driver to reach a resolution at the earliest possible opportunity, before memories have faded to the extent that there is no prospect of closure for those affected. We need to see a clear timetable for consultation and a timeframe in which we can expect the Government to bring forward legislation. Victims have already been waiting too long"***.

Ian Irwin (Advocacy Support Worker)

Page 7



SEFF has taken up the tradition that was started by Leonard and Edna Henson and laid a wreath of wild flowers on the anniversary day of the Brougher Mountain bomb. Prior to the anniversary service, Ruth Hood, a local florist and SEFF member, went up to Brougher Mountain to pick heather and Scottish thistles from the very spot where the five men lost their lives, which she then used to create a beautiful remembrance wreath of wild flowers. On the 9th of February at 9.15am Peter Murtagh, SEFF's AfIV manager and Nevin Brown, Advocacy support worker with SEFF laid a wreath on behalf of the families of the five men. Pipe major Gordon McKeown and his wife Barbara, both SEFF members from Lisbellaw, were also part of the anniversary service. To continue the tradition of piper Henson, Pipe Major McKeown played the lament 'Flowers of the Forest'



In a statement Kenny Donaldson, SEFF's Director of Services explained: "Fifty years ago there was a huge loss of innocent lives at Brougher mountain, yet little is known of those events beyond the immediacy of those impacted. We felt it absolutely essential that this milestone anniversary be acknowledged and that the families be recognised for the horrific loss they sustained and for which little attention has ever been given".

"Five hard working men, the majority of whom had their own families perished at the hands of the actions of Provisional IRA terrorists that fateful day. There is no formal recognition of the tragedy at the site, no memorial or plaque was ever placed there". "Now 50 years later we have secured the consent and wishes of the families that a granite plaque marking the atrocity be placed at the site and we are indebted to the landowner and also Arqiva who now manage the transmitter at Brougher mountain for working positively with us in facilitating the placement of the plaque".

"Due to COVID restrictions it became clear that a communal gathering involving the five families and others cannot be held on the Anniversary date itself, with their consent we will instead place the plaque at the site on Saturday 2nd October 2021 where a short service of dedication will be held. The following day the families will be the focus of our Annual Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving and a tapestry will be unveiled".

**Truth or Justice - Why not both?**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021 The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee published the Government's response to the Committee's interim report on addressing the legacy of Northern Ireland's past dated 26/10/20.

Firstly, I positively note the Government's commitment to make progress on legacy issues, by engaging directly with Victims Groups in addition to other stakeholders such as Irish Government, the Northern Ireland political parties, and civic society. This it seems is in stark contrast to the previous approach which froze victims out, following the revelation in November 2020 that unpublicised meetings had taken place at Lambeth Palace.

These talks were facilitated by the Archbishop of Canterbury's chief of staff, Canon David Porter and in attendance were representatives from the NIO, British Government, The Irish DFA, Academics and those generally perceived to have an ear into paramilitary organisations.

One topic which it is believed was discussed during the Lambeth Palace talks was 'Information Recovery' and the proposal of 'Zero Jail Time' for those paramilitaries prepared to provide in-depth information on their activities or involvement in the murder and injuries of others.

**CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY**

I doubt many of you will have heard of Edward Bulwer-Lytton. He was a novelist who in 1839 first wrote the phrase THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD, indicating that language can be more effective than violence.

Sadly in the wrong hands words can also be extremely dangerous. We saw that last month during his last days in office when, now plain old Mr. Trump, used every phrase in his Presidential 'TWITTER BOOK OF INFANT TANTRUMS' to hold onto his seat of power.

Even using Twitter to whip up his voter fan base into a frenzy of protest that was always predictably going to go beyond peaceful demonstration. Inciting them to 'fight' to overturn the democratic election result.



We watched our television screens with dismay and disgust at the disgraceful and frightening images of his brainwashed supporters obeying his words and rallying call and storming Capitol Hill, Washington.

When five people died during that display of anarchy, he attempted to wash his hands of the mayhem. He even had the gall to then use words to criticise his supporters for storming the building. That seemed reminiscent of some people here who were equally careless with their words during our 'Troubles'. They used words to inflame the passions of their followers then stood back and watched them do the dirty work. But when things turned ugly they made sure their own hands were clean.

The Pen certainly is Mightier than the Sword. In the right hands words can be used constructively to sort out any problem. However it is frustrating that words are all that victims of our Troubles and their families ever hear. For years victims have been patronised by politicians who tell them that they are the most important people at the heart of everything relating to the legacy of the past.

Words hashed and rehashed to create catchy soundbites of hope that usually ended up creating further disappointment, obfuscation and frustration for victims. The long road of indecision gets longer year after year. Sadly many victims have ended up dying waiting for words and promises to be fulfilled. Some politicians take procrastination to a whole new level.

The Victims Pension is a case in point. It saddens me to see many of them reduced to being pushed in wheelchairs to London and Stormont for yet another demeaning photo opportunity with a smiling politician. Disgracefully reduced to appear like pitiful beggars to try and shame government into paying the Victims Pension. A meagre pension long-suffering victims deserve and have been promised in law to provide them with some comfort in their final years after enduring decades of pain and hardship through no fault of their own.

Yet, while those innocent victims wait, we hear rumours that some politicians have no hesitation in using any opportunity to claim additional money on their expense accounts to bolster their already substantial salaries. Even during our current Covid-19 Pandemic some are said to have used the opportunity to claim for the cost of face masks or new laptops to allow them to work from home. If some of the rumours are to be believed some politicians even claimed mileage for Zoom call meetings they attended from the comfort of their home office. I sincerely hope that is fake news. Surely none would be so shamefaced to do that.

I am no stranger to listening to or reading meaningless words. For over 30 years I have heard and read thousands of words penned by various Chief Constables, Historical Enquiries Team members, Police Ombudsman and others in authority when I simply asked for the truth behind my brother John's murder in 1988 in my family run ice cream parlour.



## CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY

I'm sure there are some who will be reading this and already formulating their own whataboutery words in response. That he was a policeman and even off duty he was a legitimate target during our 'Troubles'. They will use words to justify his murder. I won't waste my time debating that narrative. It is pointless wasting words on those who will never listen.

To me he was simply my older brother John and I miss the lost opportunities and memories we would have made together. My mum and dad certainly weren't legitimate targets. The gunman might as well have killed them too that night back in 1988. He effectively killed them anyway. They died from broken hearts.

All murders are wrong. All our mothers' tears are the same. And all words stirring up hatred are wrong. History tends to get rewritten by some who wish to change the wording to sanitise the part they played in the mayhem they helped create and view their past through nostalgic rose or green-tinted spectacles.

I accept our politicians have a difficult balancing act to perform at times but it would be refreshing if they could think before selecting some of the provocative words they use. It would also be good if they could stop predictably behaving like feet stamping tantrum children throwing their toys out of their respective political prams every time they have to make decisions that affect us all.

Maybe 2021 will see them have the courage to stop looking over their shoulders to get approval from those pushing their prams. Instead they should use appropriate words to help heal us instead of rhetoric that has the potential to cause the wheels to fall off the fragile Pram of Peace or stir and re-heat our simmering 'Troubles' cauldron of division.

I hope everyone in positions of power have learned something from the now infamous siege of Capitol Hill, Washington when Trump's reckless words lit the fuse and were interpreted by his followers and as being okay to resort to violence. Social media can be dangerous. For the sake of a new impressionable Twitter and social media savvy generation, I hope our local politicians

learn to choose their words carefully when expressing their opinions on such platforms and in public. Their message should always be unambiguous. That violence is never the answer.

We have a tendency here to glorify individuals who played significant roles during our 'troubles'. Particularly former participants who chose violence to achieve their goal.

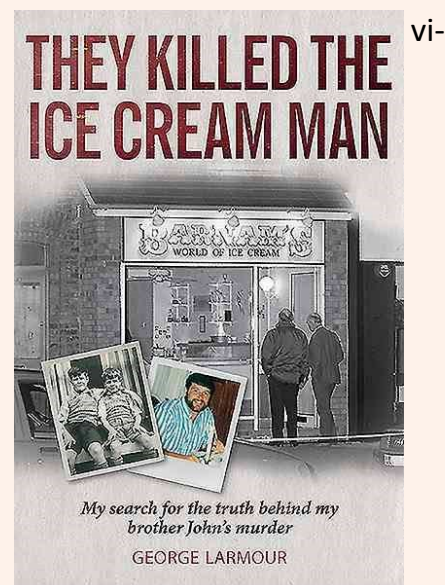
If you want to use words to eulogise those who died for a cause – eulogise the innocent victims.

They are the people who died for a cause they played no part in.

They are the real people deserving of such glorification - not perpetrators and their armchair social media supporters.

**George Larmour**

Author of 'They Killed the Ice Cream Man'



## Brougher Mountain 50th Anniversary

### BBC Land Rover booby trap bomb

50 years ago on the 9th February 1971, five innocent civilians were murdered by The Provisional IRA at Brougher mountain near Trillick, County Tyrone. The men died as they travelled by Land Rover to repair a BBC transmitter. A bomb believed to be intended for the Army was detonated when the Land Rover ran over a trip wire at knee height. The Land Rover was blown to pieces around 9:15am with debris thrown 400 yards down the mountain as a result of the blast which left a 5 ft. crater in tract. Three of the men murdered worked for a Kilkeel-based firm; John Eakins, 52 and a married father of 7, Harry Edgar, 26 and single, George Beck, 43 and a married father of 2. Meanwhile two BBC engineers died alongside them; William Thomas, 35 and a married father of 2 and David Henson, 23, (known as Malcolm) and who was engaged.



Tragedy struck in 1971 for Leonard and Edna Henson, parents of 24-year-old David Malcolm Henson, a BBC engineer, murdered by the Provisional IRA with four other civilians, when their Land Rover was blown up on the Brougher Mountain. Malcom's father, Leonard Henson, married Malcolms mother, Edna, during WWII where he was in active service on the continent- evacuated from Dunkirk and decorated by Field Marshall Montgomery. Mr Henson was a Pipe Major of the Highland Light Infantry and every year since the anniversary of his son's death Mr Henson visited the site to play the pipes. He would play a piece he composed himself which was called 'Lakeland Hills' for his son whom was also a piper. After playing the lament Mr Henson would stand in silence, lay a small wreath of wild flowers at the spot and pick a small bunch of heather to take home to his wife Edna, to plant in her garden at home. On one of these pilgrimages he lost his left eye in an accident which resulted in him wearing his trademark eye-patch. Mr Henson passed away in 2009, aged 95.



Malcolm's father, Leonard, who passed away aged 95 in 2009, pictured with his wife, Edna